



Commissioner Steve Novick
Leah Treat, Portland Bureau of Transportation
Mayor Charlie Hales
Comp Plan Staff

To all concerned Parties-

I am writing to you on behalf of the Eliot Neighborhood Association (ENA), which has received numerous complaints from neighbors about the dangerous traffic conditions of NE 7th Avenue, between NE Broadway and NE Fremont. The ENA is particularly concerned about the future deterioration of traffic conditions on that street given the city's approval of a 6-story apartment building at 7th and Russell as well as increased population in the area.

Currently, 7th Avenue is a well-used de facto bike route. Unfortunately, many non-local drivers utilize the street as a way to avoid Martin Luther King Boulevard. These drivers often drive dangerously, ignoring the speed limit, driving too fast around the intersection planters (sometimes toppling their cars over), driving too close to cyclists, failing to stop for pedestrians crossing the street, and running stop signs.

In addition to acting as a major bikeway, 7th Avenue is a crossing point for many children who attend Irvington School, King School and other neighborhood establishments. Because of an interruption of sight-lines, offset intersections and high speed differential, speeding is particularly dangerous on 7th.

As you know, the city plans to eventually install a bike greenway and build a bridge across Highway 84 landing on the north side at NE 7th Avenue. This will encourage bike usage on 7th Avenue and upgrading NE 7th for active transportation uses is consistent with the city's long-term plans. It will also connect with the east side of the green loop, a new concept in the 2035 plan

Because 7th Avenue has become increasingly dangerous, we believe that it is paramount that PBOT take steps to ensure that 7th Avenue once again becomes a safe neighborhood street. To that end, we would like for the city to recognize that 7th Avenue is currently a de facto bike boulevard and immediately turn 7th Avenue into a bike greenway. This would make the street safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

In order to implement this improvement, along with the appropriate bike markings, while two diverters would be preferable, it is essential that the city install at least one bike-friendly diverter on 7th, so as to remove it from being an alternative to Broadway or Fremont for drivers who eschew MLK. The best location for a diverter is at the intersection of Tillamook and 7th since Tillamook is already a bike greenway. If a second diverter is added, the southern end of Irving Park seems a logical location.

Finally, based on the propensity of cut-through drivers to speed on 7th, sometimes as faster than 40 mph, we believe that traffic calming, which may include speed bumps sufficient to slow the cars to 20 mph, stop signs or traffic diverters along the corridor.

Some Neighbors have recently been making a bunch of noise about NE 9th avenue being 'the' route in this part of town. There are many disadvantages to this proposal and it appears all of these complaints are due to NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) concerns or just FUD (Fear Uncertainty and Doubt) being spread to uninformed residents. The reasons for NE 7th are:

- 1) Already heavily used by bicyclists and pedestrians
- 2) Through traffic should be using MLK Blvd; vulnerable road users and adjacent residents should not be overwhelmed by traffic avoiding MLK



- 3) Connects directly to existing bike infrastructure in the Lloyd and across Broadway/Weidler
- 4) Shallower grade and 3 less hills to go up and down
- 5) Existing traffic signals at Fremont, Prescott, and Alberta
- 6) Major detour around Irving park will reduce use of the facility
- 7) Only a few blocks away from the bike/ped-unfriendly MLK commercial corridor
- 8) NE 7th connects to King School and King Farmer's Market
- 8) There are existing traffic calming measures in place on stretches of 7th (improvement is necessary but better than starting from a blank slate)
- 9) Future bike/ped bridge over I-84 likely to touch down at 7th on N side of freeway
- 10) Project cost is noticeably lower
- 11) Every cyclist that was polled near NE 7th and Knott indicated they would not ride on 9th even if a greenway went on it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the proposed improvements.

Sincerely,

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